

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 ARAE-00

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P R 121955Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9465

USCOMSOLANT PRIORITY

INFO CNO WASHDC

CINCLANT FLT NORFOLK

USDAO CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 1799

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TD, US

SUBJECT: UNITAS XVII VISIT TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

REF: (A) PORT OF SPAIN 1546 (161140Z JUN 76),

(B) STATE 166653 (061546Z JUL 76)

1. UNITAS VISIT TO PORT OF SPAIN JULY 26 TO 28 SHOULD
PROCEED AS PLANNED.

2. MINOR FLURRY CAUSED LOCALLY LAST WEEK ON BASIS OF
EXAGGERATED PRESS REPORTS OF JOINT "WAR GAMES" WITH U.S.,
VENEZUELAN, BRAZILIAN, CHILEAN, AND URUGUAYAN NAVIES.
EMBASSY HAS CONSULTED WITH COMMANDER OF DEFENSE FORCE
AND PERMANENT SECRETARY IN MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
IN PAST FEW DAYS. WE BELIEVE SITUATION BEING HANDLED
CALMLY AND THAT GOTT INTENDS HONOR COMMITMENT TO FLEET
VISIT AND JOINT EXERCISES.

3. AT REQUEST OF PRIME MINISTER, MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS AND MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY ARE PREPARING
REPORT FOR CABINET WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO BE DISCUSSED AT
CABINET MEETING JULY 15, BUT WE DO NOT NOW ANTICIPATE
ANY LAST-MINUTE PROBLEM ARISING. PRESS FLURRY APPARENTLY
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BASED ON COMSOLANT PRESS RELEASE WHICH WE HAVE NOT SEEN

AND CAUSED CONCERN THROUGH APPARENT LINKAGE OF TRINIDAD EXERCISES WITH SEPARATE UNITAS OPERATIONS WITH URUGUAY AND CHILE. ALSO, T&T COAST GUARD COMMANDER WILLIAMS WAS OUT OF COUNTRY ATTENDING INTERNATIONAL NAVAL REVIEW AND OPERATION SAIL EVENTS AND COAST GUARD SPOKESMAN HERE ADDED SOMEWHAT TO CONFUSION WHEN QUERIED BY PRESS.

4. AS YOU KNOW, OUR LARGER CONCERN HAS BEEN CONJUNCTION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S NATIONAL ELECTONS WITH UNITAS VISIT. THIS FACTOR HAS NOW RECEDED SOMEWHAT AS CONTINUING INTERNAL MANEUVERING WITHIN THE GOVERNING POLITICAL PARTY HAS RESULTED IN PROBABLE ELECTION DATE RECEDING EVEN FURTHER TOWARD CONSTITUTIONAL LIMIT OF SEPTEMBER 18. IT NOW APPEARS VERY LIKELY THAT UNITAS FLEET WILL HAVE DEPARTED SUFFICIENTLY IN ADVANCE OF THE ELECTION TO REDUCE ANY POLITICAL PROBLEM TO EASILY MANAGEABLE PROPORTIONS.

5. ON THIS BASIS, I HAVE NOT DIRECTLY RAISED THE ISSUE WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, AS BELIEVE WE SHOULD PROCEED ON ASSUMPTION THAT THERE IS NO VALID REASON TO AFFECT FIRM GOTT APPROVAL ALREADY GIVEN FOR THE VISIT.
FAY

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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